

# Globalization and the erosion of local wisdom: The crisis of traditional silk thread production in Soppeng

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**Abstract:** This study aims to determine how globalization presents challenges to the local wisdom of silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village by analyzing the factors causing the silk thread production crisis in Sabbe'ta village. This study is a qualitative study conducted in Sabbe'ta Village, Soppeng Regency. The determination of informants in this study was carried out using a purposive technique, based on considerations of characteristics including silk thread business actors, community leaders, and village governments in Sabbe'ta village. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews and documentation. Data analysis was carried out in stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions. The results of this study indicate that the threat of globalization to local wisdom of silk activities in Sabbe'ta village has an impact on the silk thread production crisis. The main problem of the silk thread production crisis is caused by the regeneration of silkworm farmers who do not continue in silk thread production activities so that at this time the condition of local silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village continues to decline and decline. This is indicated by the factors causing the silk thread production crisis caused by the low productivity of local seeds which have an impact on dependence on imported seeds from China, then there is no regeneration to be able to continue this silk thread production activity, and the last problem is the current market price standard for cocoons which is still as low as before.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Local Wisdom, Production Crisis, Silk Thread, Soppeng

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Silk is known as one of the natural fibers that has high economic value. Silk is based on natural protein fibers that can be woven into textiles. The common type of silk is silk from cocoons produced by the larvae of the mulberry silkworm species *Bombyx mori* (Maru, R. et al., 2021). The silk thread production process begins with the maintenance of silkworms that are fed mulberry leaves until they form cocoons. After the cocoons are formed, the fine silk fibers are then spun into thread. Silk is known for its smoothness, natural shine and softness. Silk cloth is one of the devices used in cultural ceremonies such as traditional parties and weddings so that silk cloth and its production are closely related to local wisdom values and contain moral messages (Sadapatto and Harbi 2015).

Since thousands of years ago, silk has been considered a symbol of wealth and status, especially in Asian cultures such as China, where the silk-making process was first discovered more than 4,000 years ago. Silk thread production in Indonesia in this case is an integral part of the nation's rich history and culture. The history of silk in Indonesia in prehistoric times, the community that first recognized natural fibers to meet their needs. The introduction of silk as a high-value textile material only began to develop in the 14th century along with the emergence of trade routes connecting Asia with Europe and the Middle East. Silk originating from China is known for its high quality, starting to enter Indonesia through trade routes that sold goods at that time. (Andadari, L. et al., 2023) revealed that in the 18th century with the arrival of Dutch colonialism, the silk industry in Indonesia underwent significant changes. At that time the colonial government began to organize silk production systematically by establishing factories and introducing new techniques in yarn spinning and dyeing. During this period, the silk industry also became an important commodity in international trade. The Netherlands exploited this potential by exporting silk from Indonesia to European and other Asian markets. After Indonesia gained independence in 1945, the silk industry underwent another transformation as the government attempted to develop the agricultural and industrial sectors, including silk production, as part of its economic development program. In Indonesia

itself, silk development has areas famous for its silk production, namely Java, Yogyakarta and South Sulawesi.

Silk thread production in society, especially South Sulawesi, is an industry that has been developed since the 1950s. The area that develops silk thread production is one of the sub-districts in Soppeng Regency as one of the regencies known as the city of bats, in the middle of the city bats can be found in countless numbers. Apart from its distinctive bats, the Soppeng area also has one village, namely Pising Village, Donri-donri District, which has the nickname Kampung Sabbeta, which used to produce tons of silk thread which is the raw material for woven fabrics.

Pising Village, Soppeng is nicknamed Sabbeta Village, a village term that has an identity for silk craftsmen in Soppeng Regency. The naming of Sabbe'ta Village is taken from the word sabbe in Bugis language which means Silk, so Sabbe'ta Village is Silk Village. It is named Sabbe'ta Village because it is a place for silk empowerment. Sabbe'ta Village is a place for community empowerment in which many business activities related to the silk business are carried out by the community in Sabbeta Village. The community empowerment activities carried out in Sabbeta Village are silkworm farming into cocoons and then spinning silk thread (Ramdana et al., 2021).

Sabbe'ta village in silk thread production is a traditional industry that has been developed since the 90s to become a job for most people because silkworm cultivation has a high economic value and is relatively easy to do by family members because the silk thread production process that starts from silkworm cultivation can be done in the yard of the house itself or commonly called under the house. (Fajriani, D. 2016) in his writing revealed that the history of silk thread production, the silk craftsmen community in Sabbe'ta Village was recorded as the largest silk thread producing area in Indonesia in the 1960s and reached its peak in the 1980s to the 1990s with silk thread production reaching 140 tons per year by around 400 farmer groups at that time. The heyday of silk thread production made Soppeng visited by President Soeharto twice in 1972 to inaugurate the Alam Silk Station. However, the heyday of silk thread production experienced a decline in 1995 which was the beginning of the decline in silk thread production levels caused by various factors. Until the 2000s, the number of silk thread production continued to decline to only around 40 people.

The current condition of silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village has a very large production level comparison from its heyday in 1980. The level of silk thread production comparison has decreased from 400 farmer groups in 1980 to several farmer groups that do not even reach tens. In the South Sulawesi Silk Commodity Value Study Report (Sadapotto, A. et al. 2021) it was revealed that the findings in the field in 2020 showed that there were 13 farmer groups producing silk thread in Soppeng. In the last few years until now, the decline in the level of silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village has continued to show a decline in the silk industry that can no longer be avoided because it is caused by several problems. This decline in production levels indicates a period of crisis for the current condition of silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village.

On the other hand, globalization at this time with significant technological advances that continue to develop presents various challenges for society including threats to local wisdom and social values and negative impacts on the economic sector, especially local production. (Handayani AP et al., 2024) revealed that the threat of globalization to local wisdom is centered on disruption to traditional livelihood systems, changes in the economic structure of society and the erosion of collective values that support local social welfare. Globalization introduces economic and technological models or practices that cannot be in accordance with traditional economic practices. Therefore, globalization is a threat to local wisdom is a crucial problem that can cause inequality in local communities in maintaining traditional economic activities.

Based on the data above which shows the condition of the silk thread production crisis which has decreased significantly and the threat of globalization to local wisdom. Therefore, this study focuses on the analysis of the phenomenon of the silk thread production crisis which is influenced by various aspects. This study uses an in-depth socio-economic anthropology approach which will reveal how the phenomenon of the silk thread production crisis in Sabbe'ta village is by considering the views of the community regarding silk thread production in the past, the causes of the silk thread production crisis and the form of adaptation to the silk thread production crisis.

## 2. METHODS

The research was conducted in Sabbe'ta Village, Pising Village, Soppeng Regency, South Sulawesi Province. The informants who participated in this study were determined purposively, which were deliberately adjusted to the informant's criteria and the researcher's considerations. In the context of this study, the criteria set for data collection included the silk craftsmen community, traditional or community leaders and the village government in Sabbe'ta Village, Soppeng.

This study uses a descriptive research type using a qualitative approach. This study explains and describes certain conditions based on data obtained in the field in accordance with the research problems that have been formulated. This qualitative study describes the data in depth and analyzes the research problems based on the data obtained.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out by observation, interviews and documentation. Observations in this study were carried out by observing and recording the activities and behavior of the target object. In this case, the researcher directly observed the activities of silk thread craftsmen including silkworm cultivation places, silkworm cultivation processes and interactions in silk thread production activities. In-depth interviews were conducted by asking questions directly to informants. This study uses an in-depth interview method to collect information about the views and perspectives of informants regarding silk activities experiencing a production crisis. Interviews were conducted using interview guidelines that made it easier for researchers to collect information related to the study. As well as documentation, as real evidence that supports research data.

The data analysis technique in this study uses the Sugiyono (2019) model which consists of four stages. The first stage, data triangulation by collecting data first. The second stage, data reduction by sorting data related to the research problem of the silk thread production crisis consisting of perceptions, causes and forms of community adaptation. The third stage, presentation of data arranged to make it easier to understand the research problem related to the silk thread production crisis. The last stage, drawing conclusions on the research findings.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

- **Silk Thread Production Activities in Sabbe'ta Village, Soppeng**

Silk thread is the main raw material in making silk cloth which is known as a luxurious Bugis tribe fabric with the beauty and softness of its fabric that is unmatched, making silk cloth a fabric that has a high price on the market. The following is the process of silk thread production activities in Sabbe'ta Village, Soppeng.

(1) First stage: Silkworm Rearing



**Figure 1.** Maintenance of silkworms

*Source: researcher documentation*

In the first stage of silk thread production activity, starting from maintenance in the form of silkworm seeds which takes approximately 15 days for the silkworm egg cultivation itself. Most farmers supply silkworm egg seeds from the Ta'juncu Natural Silk Center. This silkworm cultivation is carried out by providing silkworm feed in the form of mulberry leaves planted by the farmers

themselves until the silkworms grow large and can produce silkworm cocoons or commonly called cocoons.

(2) Second stage: Boiling Silkworm Cocoons



**Figure 2.** Silkworm Cocoon

**Source:** researcher documentation

Next, after the caterpillar has finished forming the cocoon, it is harvested before the adult butterfly emerges. If left to hatch, the cocoon fibers will be broken, while the cocoon fibers are used to make high-quality silk thread. After the cocoons are harvested, the next step is to boil the cocoons in hot water. Boiling the cocoons aims to kill the pupae inside the cocoon so as not to damage the fibers. As conveyed by Pung Munca (50 years old) below.

*“Jaji kufurani mallebu kokon e' yalani i nasu, ajjana i metta mala i, afana denatu matu na mancaji benang, maddecca bawang mi tu matu. Yalani i nasu nappa odding mancaji benang. Meaning: So after becoming a cocoon, then cook it, don't take too long to harvest the cocoon because if you take a long time to take it, the cocoon will not become thread but will hatch. So after being harvested, cook it immediately so that it can become thread.”*

(3) Stage Three: Spinning Silkworm Thread



**Figure 3.** Yarn Spinning

**Source:** research documentation by Dewi Fajriani

After boiling, the fine raw yarn is then spun and combined into a stronger yarn. This spinning process is done using a traditional machine made of wood. This spinning process is still done in a traditional way, different from the modern way that uses tools that have new technological uses.

(4) Fourth stage: Cleaning of Silk Thread Results



**Figure 4.** Silk Thread Results

**Source:** researcher documentation

Finally, the spun yarn will be washed to remove the remaining sericin, then dried. This process will make the yarn softer and shinier. The results of this silk yarn can enter the market to be sold as raw materials for making typical Bugis silk cloth. The results of this silk yarn are usually distributed outside the Soppeng area such as Wajo, Gowa and other areas.

- **Sabbe'ta Village Community's Perception of the Glory of Silk Thread Production in the Past**

Siahaan, A. (2010) stated that perception is a process in which individuals organize and interpret sensory information to give meaning to their environment. Factors that influence people's perception usually have characteristics, experiences, situations and attributes of objects such as background, size and others. This means that the process of perception is greatly influenced by various internal factors such as experience and external factors such as social context, culture and the surrounding environment. Sabbe'ta village, an area that has a distinctive characteristic as a significant silk area, was born from the perception of its people regarding the silk thread production activity that has existed for decades.

The perception of the Sabbe'ta village community in viewing the glory of silk thread production in the past revealed that the glory presented a regional identity whose impact can be felt to this day. The Sabbe'ta village community revealed that their area gained an identity as the largest silk thread producer in South Sulawesi and even reached the national level. In addition, another view of the community towards the glory of silk thread production in the past is also related to the high economic value of silk thread. The Sabbe'ta village community believes that the high economic value of silk thread makes it easier for the Sabbe'ta village community, especially silkworm farmers, to meet their daily needs. The community's perception of the glory of silk thread production in the past is influenced by the various positive impacts obtained by the Sabbe'ta village community on economic activities that support the lives of its people. The great impact of the glory of silk thread production in the Sabbe'ta village has made silk activities in the area still survive to this day even though it is experiencing a crisis in silk thread production which is a serious challenge for the Sabbe'ta village community.

The Sabbe'ta village community interprets the glory of silk thread production as something that has a big impact on the livelihoods of the Sabbe'ta village community. This has given rise to the perception of the Sabbe'ta village community regarding the glory of silk thread production in the past, including the perception of the identity of the region as a producer of silk thread and the perception of the high economic value of silk thread as follows.

***Public Perception: Regional Identity***

The perception of the Sabbe'ta village community towards the glory of silk thread production in the past includes views on the identity of their region. The Sabbe'ta village area is known as an area that produces raw materials for making silk cloth. The Sabbe'ta village community views their regional identity as the largest silk thread producer born because of the glory of silk thread production in the Sabbe'ta village in the past. This highlights that the identity of the Sabbe'ta village area is closely related to its naming. An area that has the nickname as the silk village in Soppeng. This was conveyed by Mr. Sukardi (40 years old) that the identity of the Sabbe'ta village community is closely related to the majority of silk activities carried out for decades. The naming was born as an identity that shows the characteristics of the Sabbe'ta village area.



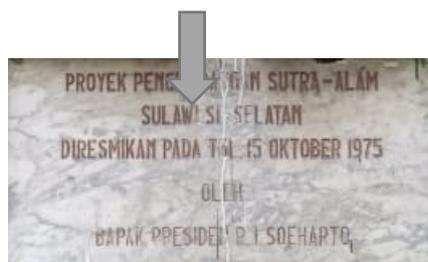
**Figure 5.** Signpost for Sabbe'ta Village  
*Source: researcher documentation*

In addition, the perception of the Sabbe'ta village community towards the glory of silk thread production in the past is also strengthened by the view of Mr. Nurdin (61 years old) who said that the glory of silk thread production in the past was an important factor in the birth of regional identity in the Sabbe'ta village. The glory of silk thread production which produced hundreds of tons in the past indicated the success of silk thread production activities, thus giving birth to a regional identity as a producer of silk thread which still survives today.

1) Evidence of Regional Identity

The formation of identity as Kampung Sabbe'ta or Kampung Silk in Pising Village is inseparable from the history of silk activities since the 1960s. The glory of silk thread production in the past in the village of Sabbe'ta was born from the historical events of silk activities that have been going on for decades. Most of the villagers are involved in all silk thread production activities, from silkworm maintenance to the thread spinning process. The success of silk thread production has a positive impact on the village economy, increasing the standard of living of the community and providing a livelihood to meet their daily needs. Therefore, the silk industry in the village of Sabbe'ta has a significant impact and perception on the sustainability of the livelihoods of the people of the village of Sabbe'ta. The journey of silk in Sabbe'ta village in producing silk thread is recorded to have reached the peak of its glory as the largest silk thread producer in Indonesia in 1980 to 1990. The journey of silk in Sabbe'ta village since the 1960s which has survived until now has made this village known for its silk to the point of being able to form a cultural identity obtained through the historical process. In historical evidence, Sabbe'ta village was once visited by President Soeharto in 1972 to inaugurate the natural silk station, as can be seen in the following quote and picture.

"We used to be glorious in Soppeng, the proof is that we produced 120 tons of thread, then in 1972, Mr. Harto inaugurated this monument in front of this place."  
Mr. Wirfa (63 years old)



**Figure 6.** Natural Silk Development Monument  
*Source: researcher documentation*

The quote and the picture above highlight that the journey of silk in the Sabbe'ta village has records or evidence that can be immortalized as an achievement of a region. The silk monument which was inaugurated as a natural silk center by the second President of Indonesia has a very strong and close indication that makes the area known with an identity as a silk area. This is inseparable from the very high production achievements in the past.

The cultural identity of a region is formed through the process of social interaction, history and traditions that are passed down from generation to generation. Deeply rooted cultural values provide a unique character and pride for its people (Adisutrisno G, 2021).

## 2) Pride in Regional Identity

Due to the formation of an identity as a silk village, the people of Sabbe'ta village are proud of the work of producing silk thread, because this is what becomes the identity of their village, although the journey of silk thread production activities that have declined in the present is something that is very regrettable for the local community, but this also does not dampen the enthusiasm and pride of the community towards their identity as a silk village.

*"We have famous silk here, people who want to look for thread come here, that's what makes us proud to be known for silk. Many people come here to see silk." Mr. Nurdin (61 years old)*

The indicator that is the pride of the community towards the identity of Sabbe'ta village is Sabbe'ta village which is often visited to learn about silk. Many people from outside South Sulawesi, Indonesia and even abroad come to visit to see silk activities in Sabbe'ta village. People usually come to visit to do research, silk tourism or learn batik in Sabbe'ta village, as can be seen from the quotes and pictures sent by the informant as follows.

*"Yes... many foreigners come here, even from other countries, many Germans, Dutch people come here to see the silkworms, many of them, there are also Brazilians who come, many." Mr. Nurdin (61 years old)*



**Figure 7.** Visitors to Sabbe'ta Village Come from Abroad  
*Source: informant documentation*

The picture and statement of Mr. Nurdin above indicate that silk in Sabbe'ta village is not only known domestically but also internationally. The identity as a village that produces the most silk thread has brought its own pride to the people of Sabbe'ta village. The many visitors from within and outside the country to see the silk in Sabbe'ta village proves that Sabbe'ta village as a village that produces silk thread has become an identity that is attached to it until now.

### **Public Perception: Pillars of Family Economy**

Another perception of the community towards the glory of silk thread production in the past is that the people of Sabbe'ta village, especially the silkworm farmers, view the glory in the past as a pillar of the family economy. During its heyday, the people of Sabbe'ta village said that the silk thread industry was the main source of livelihood for many families there. The heyday of silk thread production in the past, the people of Sabbe'ta village remember it as a time when the village economy grew and developed rapidly so that the welfare of life was more stable financially. These local economic activities were able to support family life, the silk thread industry became the backbone of the village economy. This was conveyed by Mr. Nurdin (61 years old) who argued that the activity of the community that was widely engaged in in his area was silk. Silk thread production is a commodity that generates a lot of income, according to him this product is very promising and helps meet his needs and also has a significant impact on the community there during its heyday in the past, because silk thread production is an activity that can be done with family members easier than other jobs according to him.

The Sabbe'ta village community stated that the glory of silk thread production in the past, the community itself felt the impact in the form of an increase in the standard of living so that access to better

education and the ability to meet basic needs independently. This shows that the local economy is growing and has a significant impact on the progress of the community's livelihood.

*"Back then, when silk thread was on the rise, it helped us a lot with our family's economy. The whole family took care of it. We lived off silk thread indeed. We got all our basic needs from silk back then." Mrs. Hawang (50 years old).*

*"Basically, my brother and I were sent to school by our parents from the results of this silk, all our daily needs are indeed from the results of silk. In the past, when silk thread was at its peak, our family had a lot of economic resources there. In the past, we depended on it, but now it has continued to decline, even though the results are many, well, unfortunately the conditions are different now". Mr. Sukardi (48 years old)*

- **Factors Causing the Silk Thread Production Crisis in Sabbe'ta Village**

The main cause of the silk thread production crisis in Sabbe'ta village is the decreasing number of silkworm farmers in recent years. The lack of interest of the younger generation in traditional activities such as silkworm farming is a distant choice for the younger generation who prefer more modern jobs than having to farm silkworms. The decline in silk thread production activities has caused many concerns about its sustainability in the future. In addition, the silk thread production crisis is also caused by the lack of productivity of local seeds, making silkworm farmers in Sabbe'ta village have to depend on using seeds imported from China. Another problem is that the low price standard for cocoons is the cause of the decline in farmers' enthusiasm for producing silk thread. The condition of silk farming that continues to decline can be marked by the difference in the yard of the Sabbe'ta village community. This difference can be seen from the decreasing number of mulberry plants as food for silkworms in the yards of each silkworm farmer, even the land that is usually planted with mulberry leaves has now changed to corn plants because it has been converted into land for other commodity crops.

South Sulawesi Silk Commodity Value Chain Study Report by Sadapotto, A. et al. (2021) in this case the study aims to support the South Sulawesi government program in restoring the glory of the silk industry by analyzing the silk commodity value chain from upstream to downstream in Soppeng, Wajo and Enrekang Regencies. The results of the study stated that the silk industry in South Sulawesi experienced a significant decline, especially in the upstream sector, namely silkworm and mulberry cultivation. Based on the data in the report in the 1980s, PT. Perhutani recorded 15 districts as consumers of silkworm eggs, but in 2020 only 2 districts remained. This is due to the number of silkworm farmers which has decreased drastically, with only 74 silkworm farmers remaining in South Sulawesi and these farmers are only dominated by elderly farmers with low levels of education.

Overall, the report above provides a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by silk industry players in South Sulawesi, including Sabbe'ta Village, Soppeng. The core of the report on the study of the silk commodity value chain in South Sulawesi emphasizes the importance of a comprehensive approach in overcoming structural, social and economic problems or challenges faced by the silk industry. The challenges of the silk industry include a decrease in the number of silkworm and mulberry farmers, dependence on imported silkworm egg seeds, low productivity and quality of local silk yarn, and minimal economic incentives for key players such as farmers, spinners and weavers.

Mr. Sukardi (48 years old), a silkworm farmer, said that silk farming in Sabbe'ta village is currently experiencing a decline, namely the work of raising silkworms which used to be the main job done with his family members but is now a side job according to him because raising silkworms can no longer support his needs as before. He said that the work of producing silk thread was the main job in the 90s, but the current condition of the community in Sabbe'ta village is that there are not enough 10 people anymore who are engaged in silk farming.

Next, Mrs. Hj. Sitti (40 years old) also revealed that the condition of silk in Sabbe'ta village is currently experiencing a silk thread production crisis. According to her, Sabbe'ta village is a silk village, silk thread production that used to be a glory for the Sabbe'ta village community who could produce hundreds of tons of silk thread, but now the condition is no longer the same as before.

And Mr. Nurdin (60 years old) and Mr. Wirfa (63 years old) gave a statement that silk thread production is decreasing every year, even now silk thread production is no longer there but only produces cocoons from silkworms. The difference in production in the past which could produce hundreds of kilos of silk thread in one month or in one harvest, is very disproportionate to the current condition of silk thread production. Even silkworm breeders at this time are no longer many, only a few people remain.

The statements above reveal that silk thread production is currently in a state of crisis and there are no longer any silk thread producers, now the people in Sabbe'ta village are no longer raising silkworms to become cocoons, which are raw materials for making thread. The crisis condition of silk thread production above is caused by several factors, namely dependence on imported seeds, no more regeneration and low market price standards that have never increased since the past until now, as discussed below.

### ***Low Productivity of Local Silkworm Seeds***

The current silk thread production crisis in Sabbe'ta village is caused by the low level of productivity of local silkworm seeds, resulting in less than optimal silk thread products. The main problem in the low level of productivity of local silkworm seeds lies in the quality of the silkworm seeds. The low quality of local silkworm seeds will produce silk thread products that have less than optimal fibers. The low quality of local silkworm seeds is caused by the low genes of the silkworm seeds. This was conveyed by Mr. Nurdin (61 years old) who revealed that these local seeds are thinner than seeds from abroad, the difference lies in the yield. Local seeds have a lower yield than seeds from China, therefore local silkworm seeds cannot produce many cocoons.

The problem of low productivity of local silkworm seeds was also conveyed by Mr. Wirfa (63 years old) that the level of productivity of local silkworm seeds in the past and present has differences. The decline in productivity at this time is caused by the reduction in human resources that can continue and develop the production activities of this silk thread.

*"Because in the past, the locals were crossed with different types so that they could produce good seeds. In the past, if it was local, our farmers were smart here, they would mate them themselves and then tonight there would be eggs, one pair of butterflies could produce 500 eggs. Unfortunately, the problem is that the knowledge from the past is no longer being continued. That is what is really concerning now." Mr. Wirfa (63 years old)*

The low productivity of local silkworm seeds that produce less than optimal silk thread products makes silkworm farmers choose an alternative by importing silkworm seeds from China. The people of Sabbe'ta village were forced to take the path of using silkworm seeds from other countries to be able to maintain their income through silk thread production activities. Importing raw materials from China certainly makes it difficult for farmers in Sabbe'ta village to be able to freely produce how much thread product can be produced. By importing these raw seed materials, it can also have an impact on the dependence of farmers in Sabbe'ta village as follows.

Dependence on imported raw materials has a very significant impact on the sustainability of silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village. The decline in silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village in recent years has been caused by dependence on imported seeds from China. Raw materials in the form of silkworm seeds are actually the main cause of the crisis in silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village. The people of Sabbe'ta village who are silkworm keepers or farmers revealed that the seeds that were previously used, namely local seeds produced by Perum Perhutani itself, are no longer productive, so now the seeds that are often used are seeds imported from China.

Currently, silkworm farmers in Sabbe'ta village use seeds imported from China and are raised until they become cocoons or commonly called cocoons. The maintenance of silkworms until they become cocoons takes approximately 15 days by feeding the silkworms, after the silkworms have become cocoons, the silkworm farmers sell them back to China again at a price of 60 thousand rupiah per kilo, different from the past when it was sold in the form of silk thread which was more profitable because it generated income of more than 1 million rupiah per harvest until the thread spinning. Local seeds that were previously produced until they became silk thread had very large production support, but this has not continued until now because local seeds produced by Perum Perhutani are no longer productive because the fiber produced by

silkworms is no longer much so that it requires silkworm farmers in Sabbe'ta village to use seeds imported from China. As in the following quote.

*"So the cause is that we are dependent on the seed problem, we always have to import it because local seeds are no longer produced, the seeds are less productive than local ones so they are no longer suitable for production, in the end the parent seeds of Perum Perhutani were withdrawn and then they have not been produced until now. What about silk thread now... it is decreasing! This is also a hard job, if I think about it, I can't sleep until night because we live dependent on the seeds that have to be imported from China. If we talk about silk, its condition is now continuing to decline, you could even say it is almost extinct...! Yes, there is no thread production. Yesterday in 2024, I think I still had time to sell the thread, there was still some... because at that time there were two who gave out types of seeds, one could be spun and the other one could not be spun, now there is only one left, yes... from China" Mr. Nurdin (61 years old)*

Mr. Nurdin (60 years old) stated that the cause of the silk thread production crisis in Sabbe'ta village was that the silkworm farming community there experienced problems regarding dependency on seed problems. Silk thread production using local silkworm seeds has been replaced by imported seeds because local seeds that are no longer productive produce less than optimal silk threads, requiring silkworm farmers to use imported seeds from China. According to him, this has a huge impact on the drastic decline in silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village, and he even continued that silk thread production is almost extinct in his area.

*"Now the seeds are taken from China, so we take them and we breed them until they become cocoons. After they become cocoons, they are sent to China again, so they don't become threads anymore and that is actually the challenge now," said Mrs. Sunarti (49 years old).*

Furthermore, Mrs. Sunarti revealed that the seeds imported from China have been used for several years, the seeds were taken and maintained by the Sabbe'ta village community only until they became cocoons or chrysalises at the request of China itself. She continued by saying that this is actually a challenge at this time for silkworm breeders because the worms that are usually farmed to become silk thread products are no longer intended to become thread but only until they become cocoons and then sent back to China.

*"China has its own seeds, so what it needs is not silk thread. Only raw materials to make silk thread, that's its strategy. So the cocoons are produced in Indonesia and then sent to China, then it makes thread or cloth and sells it again, one of which is to Indonesia at a fantastic price. Even though the raw materials are made from here," Mr. Nurdin (61 years old)*

Mr. Nurdin's statement above is that the Chinese party that provides seeds for silkworm farmers in Sabbe'ta village does not need silk thread but only needs cocoons. According to him, that is a strategy that can benefit his party because the cocoons produced in his area are sent back to China and then the silk thread or cloth that is sold can generate a lot of profit at a high price to other countries including Indonesia even though the silkworms he breeds come from Sabbe'ta village itself.

Based on several statements from the silkworm breeding community in Sabbe'ta village above, they stated that they experienced challenges regarding dependence on imported seeds from China, the decline in production levels which currently rarely produce silk threads but only in the form of cocoons has caused silkworm breeders to experience a crisis in silk thread production. Imported seeds from China require silkworm breeders in Sabbe'ta village to sell them

in the form of cocoons, unlike the local seeds that were previously used, namely producing worms to become silk threads.

### ***Silkworm Farmers' Regeneration Crisis***

Oktafiani I et al., (2021) stated that farmer regeneration refers to the process of passing on the farming profession to the younger generation so that the agricultural sector continues and is sustainable. However, according to him, this process is increasingly difficult to do in Indonesia. The large number of farmers who are elderly and the lack of interest of young regeneration to be involved in the world of agriculture are major challenges for the sustainability of this sector.

The statement above emphasizes that the interest of the younger generation in maintenance or farming is very low, many young people prefer jobs outside the agricultural sector because they consider the agricultural sector less profitable and less attractive so that many young people prefer jobs in the technology and service industry sectors because they consider that these jobs are more promising in terms of income, comfort and ease of access. While agriculture or maintenance is often seen as a traditional job that is heavy, hard, not prestigious and gets an unstable income compared to other jobs. This makes the younger generation reluctant to enter the world of agriculture and maintenance, they tend to prefer jobs that are considered modern and fixed in terms of working hours and income.

Farmers or silkworm breeders in Sabbe'ta village are included in the lack of interest of the younger generation in pursuing this field, this should be a special concern for the sustainability of silk in the area. The crisis condition of silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village is also caused by the difficulty of successors who take over the work of silkworm maintenance, the interest of the younger generation is very minimal to be able to continue the work as silkworm breeders which is considered a traditional job. On average, silkworm breeders in Sabbe'ta village are pre-elderly to elderly so it is difficult for silk production in Sabbe'ta village to be able to survive and develop in the future if they continue to not have successors who can continue silk thread production activities.

*"That's the current drawback because regeneration is difficult, including the young ones, I'm 48 years old and I still keep caterpillars until now," said Mr. Sukardi (48 years old).*

Mr. Sukardi's statement above explains that the condition of silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village is currently in a difficult period to continue the silk work in the Sabbe'ta village area. The average age of the caretakers is around 40 and above so it is difficult to develop. In addition, there is also a statement from Mr. Nurdin as follows.

*"Here, all the farmers are aged around 40-60 years. If there are no younger children here, there is a term *matanre siri*' which means that today's children don't want to keep *ule*'. Children also now prioritize cellphones now so they like instant work that is fast, that is actually the challenge that makes it difficult for us to develop this silk. That is also the drawback, now there is no interest in this silk activity. So one day if it is like this, it will become extinct," Mr. Nurdin (61 years old)*

Mr. Nurdin emphasized that currently the average age of farmers or silkworm breeders is around 40-60 years, so seeing this condition, the interest of the younger generation is very minimal in silk maintenance activities. According to him, the condition of the younger generation currently prioritizes the advantages of *smartphones* that can work *instantly*. According to Mr. Nurdin, this condition is a big challenge at this time so that silk in Sabbe'ta village is difficult to develop because the interest of this younger generation is very minimal in silkworm maintenance activities to the production of silk thread that has long existed in Sabbe'ta village. More than that, Mr. Wirfa also emphasized the following conditions.

*"The current obstacles include our lack of regeneration, our human resources are low because now young people prefer practical things, just open their cellphones, so slowly they say that silk in Soppeng is decreasing and continuing to decrease. In fact, if we can overcome the problem of seeds... that's possible, this is how to imagine the*

*younger generation who want to work in this silk field, cross-breeding seeds using the knowledge that has been learned on campus and want to be consistent in this field, wow, our silk will be glorious like before. But that's not the condition, now where are there young people who want to raise ule', tell me to cultivate my ule' in Soppeng, they definitely won't, I'm a graduate! So that's actually what is worrying now," Mr. Wirfa (63 years old)*

Mr. Wirfa's statement above that the current constraints on silk thread production refer to the absence of regeneration that can continue silkworm maintenance activities until the production of its threads. According to him, young people now tend to be more practical in activities or jobs than raising silkworms. This is what causes silk thread production to continue to decline at this time, the perception of the younger generation regarding work as farmers or silkworm keepers is very backward according to him, this is a concern at present because there is no successor to silk activities so that silk in Sabbe'ta village is difficult to develop. Silkworm maintenance is currently only carried out by people who are over 40 years old so that this job is identical to the work done by fathers and mothers only. The current challenge of minimal regeneration is a special concern according to Mr. Wirfa, consistent with the silk sector which is carried out by the younger generation should be able to improve the condition of silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village.

#### **Low Market Price Standard for Cocoons**

Lubis, et al. (2024) emphasize that the market price standard usually refers to the price at which goods or services are traded. This price is determined by the balance between supply and demand. In short, the market price standard is the price at which the quantity of goods or services offered is equal to the quantity demanded by buyers at a certain point through an agreement.

The market price standard that has never increased and remains low can have a significant impact on the sustainability of the agricultural sector and silkworm farming in Sabbe'ta village, causing a decline. When the price of cocoons remains low for a long time, farmers or silkworm breeders face various challenges that hinder their ability to develop and survive economically. The impact on the long-term market price standard that has never increased can threaten the sustainability of the silkworm farming sector in Sabbe'ta village. The price of silk in the form of cocoons that is still being worked on until now is still the same, the price standard has never increased even a little since the past, so this has triggered a crisis in silk thread production faced by silkworm breeders in Sabbe'ta village.

Mr. Wirfa (63 years old) said that the current condition of silk production in Sabbe'ta village is different from the production conditions in the past. Silk in the past was produced in the form of silkworms until they were spun into threads, while currently no one produces silk until it becomes threads but only until it becomes cocoons or commonly called cocoons. The income of silk farmers in Sabbe'ta village is currently much different from their income in the past because the silkworms that are raised usually take only 22 days to pocket income from silk threads of 1.8 million, but the current condition is not like before, he continued, because since the entry of Chinese seeds in Sabbe'ta village, silk production is no longer up to silk threads but only up to cocoons which are taken for only 60 thousand rupiah per kilo. According to him, this is one of the current obstacles because the standard price of 60 thousand rupiah per kilo has been applied for a long time, the Chinese should have been able to increase the price of cocoons to encourage silkworm farmers. In addition, there are several other interview quotes from silkworm breeders as follows.

*"In terms of income, we have spun a lot of silk, but now it has decreased because it is only sold in the form of cocoons. This is also a problem from there, they have not wanted to increase the price of the cocoons since long ago, so the income is only small," said Mrs. Hawang (50 years old)*

According to him, the income that is a problem for silkworm breeders is the still low price standard for cocoons that have been bred, in contrast to the large income that can be obtained if the cocoons can also be spun by the silkworm breeders in Sabbe'ta village.

*"But if the price of this coconut could go up a little, the price of noodles would go up by 70 or 80 thousand, that would be even better because it hasn't gone up for a long time," said Mr. Sukardi (48 years old).*

Mr. Sukardi stated that for a long time, the price standard for cocoons had been set and never changed. According to him, this should have changed at this time in order to try to increase his income.

The declining silk income shows that the silk industry in Sabbe'ta village is experiencing a crisis. Silk, which used to be sold in thread form, is now only sold in cocoon form at the request of the Chinese who issue seeds for silkworm breeders. Since the beginning of the entry of Chinese seeds until now, the price set by the Chinese has never increased but has only remained the same for a long time, namely 60 thousand rupiah per kilo of cocoon or silk cocoon. According to him, the standard price that has long been set is too low and there should be an increase in the raw materials for making silk cloth.

#### • Sabbe'ta Village Community Adaptation to Silk Thread Production Crisis

Kaseng, ES (2024) stated that community adaptation is intended as a process of adjustment of individuals, groups, or communities to the physical, social and economic environment to achieve survival and development in various aspects of life. Community adaptation above refers to a dynamic process in which individuals, groups or communities adjust to changes in their physical and social environment. This adaptation process involves a series of actions taken to survive and ensure well-being in the face of challenges or crises that occur. The adaptation in question is not only limited to physical adjustments to natural changes such as natural disasters, but also includes social, cultural and economic adjustments.

The Sabbe'ta village community, which previously lived in stable silk thread production conditions, is now faced with the reality that the silk thread industry or production has begun to experience a significant decline and setback in recent decades. Changes in silk activities, where the younger generation prefers to look for work outside the area or work in other sectors, have reduced the number or group of farmers involved in the silk thread production process. This silk thread production crisis has an impact on the sustainability of the livelihoods of the Sabbe'ta village community.

The crisis condition of silk thread production in Sabbe'ta village shows that the community's economy to meet their daily needs can no longer fully depend on silk thread production for the time being, therefore in facing the challenges of this crisis there is a form of adaptation carried out by the Sabbe'ta village community, namely switching to commodity sectors such as corn and chili commodities and the presence of *ecoprint silk craft businesses*, as can be discussed as follows.

#### **Switching Commodity Fields**

In a crisis situation, especially an economic or production crisis, economic actors must adapt by shifting resources to sectors that have higher demand potential than production that is experiencing a crisis. In the context of a production crisis, economic actors will switch to other commodities that can support their needs to restore the economy. The act of switching commodities from economic actors is part of an effort to encourage reducing economic instability.

Adaptation in this case refers to the adjustment process carried out by economic actors to survive and meet their daily needs. The Sabbe'ta village community that carries out silk thread production activities is currently experiencing a crisis condition while switching to other commodity fields. As an effort to meet daily needs, switching commodity fields is a way for the Sabbe'ta village community that has only carried out silk thread production activities since long ago. The types and processes of switching commodity fields for farmers in the Sabbe'ta village are as follows.

##### 1. Types of Commodity Field Transition: Corn and Chili

Mrs. Hawang (50 years old) said that since silk thread production has continued to decline, the step she took was to switch to another commodity, namely chili. According to her, because silk thread production has been rarely found in recent years, chili commodities have become an alternative that can be worked on to meet daily needs.

*"Now because it keeps going down, the silk thread has moved, I also have chilies that I have been taking care of since then, the thread has been going down continuously,*

*so only the cocoons are left. In the past, the silk thread yielded quite a lot," said Mrs. Hawang (50 years old).*

Furthermore, Mr. Sukardi said that the problem of the crisis of silk thread production that continues to decline has made many people in Sabbe'ta village shift their economy to become corn and chili farmers. He even continued, the land that used to be a stretch of mulberry plants, has now turned into corn and chili gardens.

*"Because it is rare for silk thread production to only reach the cocoon, many have also switched to becoming corn and chili farmers. The lands that used to be full of mulberry plants have now changed to corn," said Mr. Sukardi (48 years old)*

## 2. The Process of Adapting to the Transition of Commodity Fields

The process of transitioning silk thread production to corn and chili commodities cannot be separated from the potential of the land owned by the Sabbe'ta village community. Between the production of silk thread and corn and chili commodities, there are similarities in terms of land potential that can be reached by the Sabbe'ta village community. Silk thread production is usually carried out only under the yards of farmers' houses, as well as corn and chili commodities, this work can be done in the yard or garden next to each community's house. Apart from the potential of the land, this transition process is also inseparable from the harvest time span of the two commodities. Silk thread production has a relatively shorter time span than corn and chili commodities. Silkworms that are farmed have a time span from the beginning of the harvest until the 22nd day to be able to produce natural silk thread raw materials, while corn and chili commodities have a much longer time span of around 3-4 months until the results can be harvested. Because of the large difference in harvest time span, both jobs have a level of ease in the form of adaptation to the transition process. For this reason, the process of switching from silk thread production to corn and chili commodities can be carried out as a form of adaptation by the Sabbe'ta village community to the silk thread production crisis that has long been experienced by the community that produces silk thread, as can be seen from the following interview results.

*"Yes, that's how it is, at one time it can be switched, coincidentally the land can be planted with corn and chili. It can be in the garden or in the yard. Because about silk, there are still some who maintain it here, only a few are left. Yes, silk now, yes, we still have it in the sense that we are still enthusiastic to continue to exist, even though it is only up to the cocoon for now, but we are not lost, there is still hope as long as we can still fight. That's why we are adapting first, switching commodities that can be done simultaneously," Mr. Nurdin (61 years old)*

*"Now we are farming silkworms and also planting corn and chili. Because the process and time can be adjusted. When there is a supply of silk egg seeds, yes.. we raise silkworms. But because now the production has decreased and we are no longer spinning yarn and only up to cocoons, so we farmers here also plant corn. Because raising silkworms also does not take up much space. If there are no silkworm eggs, then we also plant corn on the mulberry land." Mr. Wirfa (63 years old)*



**Figure 8.** Mulberry plant

*Source: researcher documentation*



**Figure 9 & 10.** Corn Plants & Chili Plants

*Source: researcher documentation*

Based on the results of the interview above, it was revealed that the form of the transition process of the two commodities that can be carried out in a relatively unproblematic time span and the potential of easily accessible land so that for the Sabbe'ta village community who made the transition to corn and chili commodities as a temporary adaptation step, they still carried out silk activities. According to him, the problem of silk thread is currently still being maintained even though its condition continues to decline so that only a few people are still working on silkworm maintenance, but Mr. Nurdin continued that this is still being attempted to maintain silk activities so that the adaptation that can be done at this time is to switch to other commodities such as corn and chili.

#### ***Adaptation of Silk Improvement through Creative Silk Craft Business***

As an effort to face the challenges of the silk thread production crisis that occurred in Sabbe'ta village, the presence of ecoprint silk craft business is a form of community adaptation to the improvement of silk in Sabbe'ta village. This silk and ecoprint craft business is an activity carried out by a group of people from Sabbe'ta village. This ecoprint silk craft business was present in 2019.

##### **1. The Presence of Silk Craft Business: *Ecoprint***

The presence of this craft business was formed in 2019 as an effort to improve silk in the Sabbe'ta village area, Soppeng. This was conveyed by Mrs. Ifa (45 years old) as the Silk Craft Manager in Sabbe'ta village regarding the reasons for the presence of craft and ecoprint businesses in the midst of silk thread production conditions that the Soppeng district government, especially the regent, previously had the idea of how silk in Sabbe'ta village could continue and survive, even apart from being able to produce raw materials for thread, how Soppeng could also produce silk cloth so that it was no longer necessary to sell its silk thread to other areas. So after departing from this idea, weaving training was present in Sabbe'ta village. From this, Mrs. Ifa continued that we have been able to produce plain white woven cloth, but what will be done with the plain white woven cloth? The community continues to try and strive for batik that can be done, but due to limited resources, they try to find out how this craft can be successful. Until finally a way was found to be able to make batik easily learned and using very affordable costs, namely the ecoprint technique. This ecoprint technique is a form of design using coloring and patterning techniques using natural materials, namely mulberry leaves. Mrs. Ifa continued that this ecoprint

craft business has also brought Sabbe'ta village to win an award as a creative and best silk craft business.

Based on the explanation above, the community's efforts to adapt to the crisis conditions of silk thread production by presenting ecoprint craft businesses as a form of improving silk so that it can continue in Sabbe'ta village. In improving silk in Sabbe'ta village, apart from the income that can be obtained by the Sabbe'ta village community who carry out these activities, this silk craft is also a means of tourism in Sabbe'ta village. Apart from consumer demand for silk craft products, many also come to visit, tour silk and learn about how to produce silk thread and how to make silk crafts in Sabbe'ta village. As can be seen in the following interview results.

*"Usually, apart from buyers, there are also visitors who come to tour silk and learn about silk because silk can be made into many things." Mrs. Ifa (40 years old)*

Based on the interview above, Mrs. Ifa revealed that the presence of silk craft businesses in Sabbe'ta village not only gets results from the products that have been made but also becomes a tourist spot for people who come to learn about silk because according to her, silk has many benefits that can be made into various things. As can be seen in the results of other interviews as follows.

*"Well, cocoons can also make money. Cocoons can also be made into crafts, such as brooches. So there are brooches made from cocoon skin, from less than optimal silk results, these unused cocoons can be made into brooches, we can sell them for 25-75 thousand rupiah, they can be colored. They can also be made into necklaces, inside we can compact the contents of paper or something, then glue it, color it, so it looks good." Mr. Wirfa (63 years old)*

Mr. Wirfa's statement above that silk has many functions that can be done, cocoons from caterpillars that can be made into brooches or necklaces so that they can generate money. Of course, making brooches and necklaces is also included in the silk craft business chaired by Mrs. Ifa. The use of various parts of this silk is Mr. Wirfa's continued creativity,

Silk craft business in improving silk in Sabbe'ta village has a big role in the adaptation efforts of the Sabbe'ta village community in maintaining the sustainability of silk which currently has a crisis condition of silk thread production. The silk craft business activities that were present in 2019 have made Sabbe'ta village increasingly known for its silk.

## 2. Types of Silk Craft Business Products

Silk production does not only produce the main product in the form of silk yarn or cloth. The benefits of each part of silk can be used as other products such as craft products made from natural silk. The types of creative silk craft business products made by silk craftsmen in Sabbe'ta village are as follows.

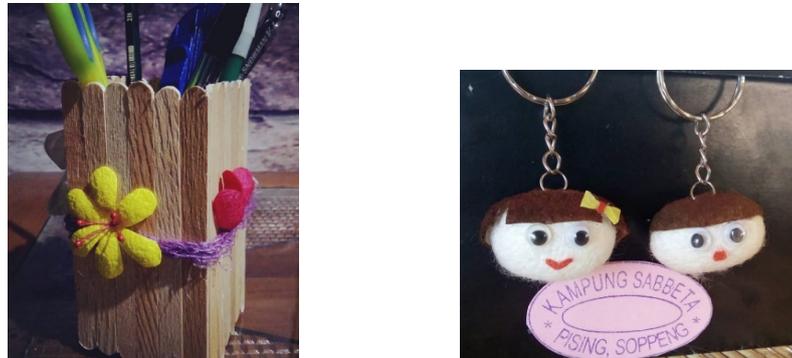
- (1) **Ecoprint**, this is a technique of coloring and patterning on plain fabric using natural materials. The natural materials in question are mulberry leaves that are processed before use and then printed on plain fabric so that they can produce attractive shapes and colors for a shirt that can be used and distributed to consumers.



Figure 11. Ecoprint

Source: informant documentation

- (2) **Accessories**, these are in the form of key chains, headbands, necklaces and pencil cases. These accessories are made from leftover cocoons in making silk thread. The unused cocoons are then created into the desired shape and transformed into accessories that can be used for everyday use.



**Figure 12.** Silk Accessories

*Source: informant documentation*

- (3) **Wall decoration**, this is a flower made from the remains of silk cocoon fibers. This wall decoration is a silk craft that has a high level of precision and difficulty. The manufacturing process has a detailed technique so that it can form as desired.



**Figure 13.** Silk Wall Decoration

*Source: informant documentation*

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The silk thread production crisis in Sabb'eta Village is a complex manifestation of the interaction between local wisdom and the impact of globalization threats. Fundamentally, the decline of this industry is caused by three main factors: the decline in the number of silkworm farmers due to the lack of regeneration from the younger generation, the low productivity of local silkworm seeds leading to dependence on imported seeds from China, and the standard price of cocoons that are not competitive in the market.

Specifically, the dependence on imported silkworm seeds from China reflects a detrimental integration into the global supply chain. Local farmers only produce cocoons and sell them back to China at a low price (60 thousand rupiah) compared to the significant profits obtained from the sale of silk thread in the past (more than 1 million rupiah per harvest). This strategy shifts the added value of production to the importing country, leaving local communities as suppliers of raw materials with minimal profit margins.

In addition, the farmer regeneration crisis is indicated as the impact of the younger generation's perception of traditional jobs. The younger generation prefers jobs that are considered more modern, instant and financially promising, as is a trend that is often influenced by the global economic narrative and ease of accessibility through technology. This condition threatens the sustainability of the silk industry which is identical to local wisdom and hereditary traditions, considering that most of the remaining farmers are elderly.

In facing this crisis, the Sabbe'ta village community has made strategic adaptations. This includes diversifying commodities into corn and chili farming as alternative livelihoods, as well as developing creative silk craft businesses such as ecoprint and accessories from leftover cocoons. This adaptation shows the resilience of the community in maintaining their economic aspects and cultural identity, despite being faced with challenges caused by the dynamics of the global market and social changes triggered by globalization.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declare no conflict of interest

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